UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.151/PC/41
16 July 1991

Original: ENGLISH

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
Third session
Geneva, 12 August-4 September 1991
Plenary Session
Item 2 A of the provisional agenda

PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS:

Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

The preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development have now reached little beyond the half way mark. The 3rd meeting of the Preparatory Committee is being held a year after the first session in Nairobi and less than a year before the Conference in Brazil. The two sessions of the Preparatory Committee that have been held so far have helped to identify areas of concern and the measures that need to be taken to address these concerns. The Preparatory Committee has also addressed the issue of the structure of outputs of the Brazil Conference and discussed at some length the framework of a coherent and concertive programme of action, Agenda 21, as a basis for the identification and presentation of the programmatic output of the Conference. The documentation for this session of the Preparatory Committee has been structured to reflect the intention to present action proposals within this framework of Agenda 21. Since the documentation for this meeting is comprehensive and voluminous this report does not deal with the substantive issues covered by other documents. It seeks to describe the work process of the Secretariat and related organizational issues. It also presents an overview of the documentation that has been placed before the Preparatory Committee for its consideration and suggest some issues which require more detailed consideration by the Preparatory Committee.

GE.91-61940/3476B

I. ACTIVITIES OF THE CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT

A. Work Process

The Preparatory Committee is aware of the system of Working Parties that has been set up by the Secretariat to mobilize the best available expertise in the United Nations system and elsewhere in order to provide analytical background and develop proposals for consideration by the Preparatory Committee. Special care has been taken to involve experts and institutions from developing countries in these Working Parties and in other related activities of the Conference Secretariat. The Secretariat continues to receive substantial and valuable support from its partners in the United Nations system. The Secretariat is deeply grateful for the excellent cooperation that it is receiving from all parts of the United Nations system as well as from the other organizations and individuals who are contributing to its work. The cooperative working pattern established for the preparations of this Conference holds out promise of providing a model for the follow-up to the Conference as also in many other areas where multi-disciplinary action is essential.

In addition to the Working Parties, the Secretariat has received very valuable advice and support from ad hoc meetings of experts, in certain cases called by the Secretariat, and in some cases by other organizations.

The Preparatory Committee has stressed the need to ensure that in all areas of work the developmental dimension is fully integrated. In addition, the strength in the 1992 Conference lies in its ability to handle linkages between issues. These two areas of work have received particular attention and it is reflected in the documentation before the Preparatory Committee.

B. Regional Activities

The report to the second Session of the Preparatory Committee outlined the regional activities undertaken in the various regions. Regional preparations continue and the following is a brief update region by region. A separate document addresses regional decisions and activities undertaken by the Regional Commissions of the United Nations system in greater detail.

1. Economic Commission for Africa

The region has witnessed a series of activities undertaken by subregional or regional organizations with the full cooperation of the UNCED Secretariat, the Economic Commission for Africa as well as the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office. Although UNCED has received financial support for subregional and regional level preparations, political and administrative problems have caused delays in the preparatory process. One subregional meeting was organized under the aegis of UNSO, CILSS and IGADD to formulate a common approach by 25 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian Region. Further activities are under way or contemplated in Southern Africa (SADCC) and the Maghreb.

The UNCED Secretariat has extended its full support to ECA for various activities envisaged as inputs into the UNCED preparatory process.

The regional meeting at the ministerial level has been rescheduled to 11-16 July 1991 but its preparations have been seriously affected by the recent political changes in Ethiopia.

The ECA is preparing a number of activities to promote the understanding of the major issues before UNCED 1992 in cooperation with the UN/DPI and the OAU and the UNCED Secretariat is lending its assistance to the convening of a Pan African Symposium on Science and Technology to strengthen Africa's capacity in science and technology related to environment and development.

The OAU convened (26-30 January 1991) a Ministerial meeting, the Pan African Regional Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development which adopted "The Bamako Commitment on Environment and Development" which was endorsed by the 27th OAU Summit meeting held in Abuja (Nigeria) early June 1991. The Summit also addressed specifically Africa's participation in the UNCED process and urged Member States to take all appropriate measures to contribute significantly to the success of the Rio Conference.

2. Economic Commission for Europe

Following the Bergen Conference the Economic Commission for Europe has continued with regional level follow-up actions. The "Energy Efficiency 2000" project has been launched and a high level meeting on sustainable development for the chemical industry sector is scheduled to be held in Warsaw in March 1992. In addition, work continues on a number of Conventions at the regional level.

3. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Following the Ministerial level meeting held in Bangkok from 10-16 October 1990 which resulted in a Ministerial Declaration, a Senior Official's meeting was held in Bangkok from 13-19 February 1991. The forty-seventh session of the Commission met in Seoul from 1-10 April and endorsed the work and the actions initiated by the Commission. ESCAP has received support for the regional strategy "Greening Development" from UNDP, UNEP and the Asian Development Bank.

Subregional activities in the Pacific assisting national level preparations and supported by the Asian Development Bank and the field offices of the United Nations Development Programme continue with good progress. A Pacific Island Developing Country (PIDC) meeting was held in Fiji for this purpose from 4-6 June 1991 and a ministerial level meeting for countries of the region is scheduled for the first half of July in Noumea.

4. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

The scheduled regional preparatory meeting at ministerial level was held from 4-7 March in Mexico City. The meeting adopted a declaration called "The Tlatelolco Platform on Environment and Development". The meeting also

endorsed the work by ECLAC and the report of the Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Development and Environment entitled "our Common Agenda", sponsored by UNDP and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Subregional level activities within the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) have been supported financially by UNDP and UNCED in close collaboration with UNDP field offices in the region.

5. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Due to the recent serious conflict situation in the region the scheduled preparatory meeting at ministerial level has been deferred until 10-13 September, in Cairo. The conference is being held at a time of regional concern about the state of the environment, after the dramatic events in the region. Twenty-one countries from the ECA and ESCWA regions are expected to participate. Among the issues to be discussed are regional perspectives and environmental challenges of sustainable development in the Arab countries in the 1990s and beyond. Critical environmental issues of global dimensions and regional concerns as well as a regional strategy will also be addressed. In addition to policy issues, the conference is also going to devote time to technical work.

C. National Preparation and Reports

Besides national preparatory work for preparatory committee meetings, national level activities in preparation for UNCED have mainly concentrated on national report preparations which are well advanced in most Member States. A number of countries have taken advantage of the annual World Environment Day (5 June) to highlight national activities such as launching the national report for public debate. One Member State presented its final report to UNCED on that day.

The United Nations Sahelian Office (UNSO) has supported 22 countries in Africa with national report preparations through funding and staff support. Likewise, the entire UNDP field network has been mobilized. Funding from UNDP country programme resources, UNDP special UNCED resources, UNSO and UNCED's own resources has to date been provided to some 80 developing countries. Further funding requests are still forthcoming. At the same time UNDP is also supporting the creation of a Sustainable Development Network in a number of countries, testing Environmental Management Guidelines at the field level as well as supporting financially non-governmental organizations in their support to the UNCED process.

The Secretariat has been informed by a number of UNDP field offices that the national reports are being prepared in final form or are being translated into an official language. On the other hand, some countries have also informed the Secretariat of delays beyond the target date of 31 July 1991.

National level preparations have been supported strongly and effectively by the UNDP Resident Representatives, who also act as UNCED's representatives, and the field officers of other agencies and organizations with significant financial support from UNDP. Whilst a number of organizations, both inside and outside the United Nations system have supported the national report

process in developing countries, the secretariat would specifically wish to commend the generous contribution of the Asian Development Bank in the Pacific region. UNCED has also provided funding for national level preparations in developing countries and the Secretariat has secured funding for the analysis of the reports from least developed countries and countries in a comparable position.

Because of the late deadline for national reports imminently prior to the Third Preparatory Session, the Secretariat deemed it more appropriate to present a brief update on the status of preparations during the third session rather than to present the facts and figures, which will quickly become outdated, in this report. A full analysis of the national reports will be presented to the Fourth Preparatory Committee meeting.

D. External Relations

1. Cooperation with United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations.

The work process established by the Secretariat continued to draw heavily on the close involvement of all relevant United Nations organizations, programmes and bodies, whose spirit of cooperation and responsiveness has been outstanding. Their support for the UNCED working parties, various consultations and studies has been instrumental for a thorough and balanced preparation of documentation intended for the third session of the Preparatory Committee.

The Secretariat closely followed the activities of United Nations agencies on questions of direct concern to the UNCED agenda, and invariably availed itself of the cooperation offered in integrating the inputs from these parallel processes in its own work programme. On the suggestion of the FAO Governing Council the Secretary-General chaired a meeting of heads of United Nations agencies and other organizations and bodies (FAO, UNEP, WMO, UNESCO, ITTO, DIEC) on 21 March 1991 with a view to increasing coordination amongst the secretariats supporting convention negotiations. Consultations to this end will continue.

The state of preparations for the 1992 Conference figured prominently on the agenda of the recent session of the Administrative Committee on Coordination in Paris in April, of meetings of the governing bodies of UNEP (May), UNDP and FAO (June) and of other United Nations agencies. The Secretariat also participated in an informal meeting of Designated Officials for Environmental Matters in Nairobi in May, in sessions of HABITAT, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and other United Nations bodies.

The contributions of other intergovernmental organizations, including regional organizations to the work of the Secretariat have also been substantial and generous.

Relations with governments remained a priority for the Secretariat. The Secretary-General of the Conference attended the Summit Conference of the Organization of African Unity in June. The Secretariat benefited considerably

from participation in the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in China, and the Conference of Francophone Environment Ministers in Tunis in April.

These and other meetings, including several official visits by the Secretary-General to member States.

The Secretariat also undertook to expand its contacts with Permanent Missions in Geneva, New York and Nairobi, with more detailed briefings on its work.

2. Non-governmental organizations

The second Preparatory Committee defined the modalities for participation of NGOs. One hundred and ninety-three (193) NGOs, out of which 23 were from the South, were accredited during that period. Around 65 additional NGOs have sent documentation to obtain accreditation for the third session of the Preparatory Committee, and approximately 300 in total are expected to attend.

2.1 Funds to assist participation by Developing Country NGOs

Recognizing the need to facilitate contribution to UNCED preparations, the Preparatory Committee requested the Secretariat to mobilize resources to enable representatives of relevant NGOs from developing countries to participate in the preparatory process.

At the March meeting of the Preparatory Committee, many governments and NGOs were concerned that developing country NGOs were under-represented among those accredited to participate. In response to this concern, an informal meeting of potential donor countries and United Nations agencies decided to establish a Developing Country NGO Participation Fund, the principal objective of which would be to cover travel and accommodation expenses to facilitate the participation of a number of developing country NGO representatives in Preparatory Committee meetings.

In cooperation with UNCED, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provided funding for the preparation by a developing country NGO representative of a proposal to establish and operate the Fund, and to select the delegates to be funded.

The UNCED Secretariat has followed up the fund proposal with interested governments and some funds have been pledged by a few governments. This has facilitated the participation of a number of NGOs from developing countries at the third session of the Preparatory Committee.

2.2 Coordination

In order to coordinate efficiently most of the initiatives of the independent sectors during the PrepCom, the NGO Liaison Unit of UNCED continues to meet regularly with a coordination group which has been informally working since January 1991. The group includes:

- United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)

- CONGO Planning Committee for UNCED

- Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI)

- International Facilitating Committee (IFC)

This group is coordinating the participation of NGOs in the PrepCom and other activities for NGOs during their stay in Geneva.

One aspect of the coordinating group's efforts is to find accomodation in Geneva at low or no-cost for NGOs of developing countries. If successful, the funds thereby saved will be used to bring additional participants from the South.

2.3 Facilities and Services provided to NGO's

With the support of the special fund for NGO activities during the PrepComs, basic services such as secretarial support, photocopying machines and fax facilities will be provided to NGO representatives to facilitate their participation in the Preparatory Committee meeting.

NGOs will have sufficient space to organize meetings and workshops, as well as sessions where an open dialogue with official delegates can take place.

2.4 Promoting NGO participation in UNCED

The UNCED NGO Liaison Officer has been able to participate in several NGO meetings and Conferences. This participation has allowed the development of stronger links with national and international NGOs, as well as with regional networks interested in the UNCED process.

Special programmes have developed from these networking efforts, such as the initiative of NGOs to write short informative booklets about the substance of each Preparatory Committee, which are distributed in Spanish, French and English to the NGOs of third world countries.

In addition to background information on the UNCED process, each regional version contains a chapter of guidance on subjects of major relevance to the region.

Several constituencies have started to work on their own Agendas for the twenty-first century, an initiative which will constitute an important complement to the official Agenda 21.

Many countries of the third world have created NGO Forums to coordinate actions leading towards UNCED at a national level and with the international community.

2.5 Contribution of Indigenous Peoples to UNCED

In order to respond to PrepCom decision A/CONF.151/PC/L38, requesting the UNCED Secretariat to take into account the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples in preparing its reports, the Secretariat has engaged consultants to provide advice on indigenous peoples perspectives on the issues to be dealt with by the Conference.

In addition, the Secretariat has consulted a number of indigenous experts to ensure that their more general knowledge of and insights into UNCED-related issues will be taken into account in the process leading to the Earth Summit in 1992.

2.6 Major NGO initiatives for UNCED

(a) The Centre for Our Common Future, a Geneva based NGO, has continued to conduct a series of public forums in support of UNCED. Since the second session of the PrepCom, forums have been held in Argentina, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Egypt and Australia. The objectives of the forums are to provide an additional avenue of input into the UNCED preparatory process for a broader group of NGOs than can be present at PrepCom meetings, and to raise public awareness of UNCED-related matters and of the need for public action in respect of the issues to be addressed by governments at the Earth Summit. In each case, these forums have attracted several hundred participants.

Further Public Forums are planned for Thailand, North America, Czechoslovakia, Japan and finally Brazil in the run up to the UNCED.

(b) Under the aegis of the Environment Liaison Centre International (a Kenyan based NGO), arrangements are progressing for the Paris Conference of environment and development NGOs, to be held in December 1991 with the support of the French government. The total number of participants is expected to be about 1,000, with 30 per cent from developed countries and 70 per cent from developing countries.

The main result of the conference is expected to be a document titled "Roots for the Future" giving an NGO perspective on environment and development. A video tape of the document will be produced in order to reach the widest possible audience.

(c) Fundacion Ambiente y Recursos Naturales has initiated a process of discussion of UNCED-related matters among Latin American NGOs. Three subregional meetings were held, in Mexico, Ecuador and Brazil, with a final meeting integrating their results held in Argentina. Two hundred and thirty NGOs from the region participated.

(d) A range of initiatives have been taken by industrial country NGOs to strengthen their dialogue with developing country NGOs on UNCED-related issues, particularly in the fields of economics, the nexus between poverty and consumption patterns, biodiversity, and climate change.

2.7 Youth involvement in UNCED process

In view of the special importance of having youth groups participate actively in the UNCED process, a project designed to maximise their involvement has been prepared by the UNCED Secretariat. A group of Youth Ambassadors for UNCED are being selected to promote dialogue amongst, and participation of, young people in local and regional activities related to UNCED in all regions of the world.

In addition, a number of youth coalitions have independently organized several major international conferences to consider the UNCED agenda and provide the input of youth to the Earth Summit.

Both the UNCED initiative and those of the youth groups themselves have as their principal goal the development of a youth agenda for action into the twenty-first century.

2.8 Business Council for Sustainable Development

The Business Council for Sustainable Development which was formed specifically to facilitate the contribution of leaders of some of the world's principal corporations to UNCED, has undertaken an extreme programme of work in preparation for the Conference. Sixteen task forces are at work examining various impacts of sustainable development from the point of view of industry.

2.9 NGO arrangements for events in Brazil, June 1992

The Brazilian NGO Forum and the International Facilitating Committee (a coalition of representatives from the various non-governmental sectors) have joined forces to organize the citizens' events to take place in Rio de Janeiro parallel to the official conference.

A constellation of citizens' events will take place under the umbrella of a Citizens' Global Conference on Environment and Development. This will include meetings of many independent sectors, and may involve a range of activities including seminars, exhibitions and concerts.

2.10 ECOFUND 1992

ECOFUND 1992, an international non-profit organization located in Washington, was established at the Secretariat's request in 1990 to solicit foundation and corporate support for the Conference. The funds received are used primarily to support experts and research assistant fellows as short and long term members of the UNCED, as well as to commission outside projects and studies to contribute to its work.

First year ECOFUND grants have been given to support fellowships for younger persons from East European and developing countries; an UNCED symposium on women and children; non-governmental expert consultants to assist Secretariat staff members dealing with science and technology, oceans, and external relations; projects and studies for UNCED which relate to local government environment initiatives, energy saving and efficiency alternatives, population, and dispute resolution and mediation. Additional grants have supported various media programmes for the Conference.

93. "The View from the South" Project

In recent times there has been a proliferation of books and articles on environment and related issues, most of them originating in the "North". These quite naturally present the issues from the perspective of the industrialized countries, even while in many instances demonstrating sympathy and respect for the problems of developing countries. The current literature dealing with environment and development issues, or at least that which receives widest circulation, therefore, primarily reflects industrialized country perspectives. In order to help provide a greater balance in the available literature on this subject as background for the 1992 Conference, a book has been commissioned to focus especially on the environment and development issues to be addressed at the Conference from the particular perspective of developing countries. An eminent developing country person, Sir Shridath Ramphal, former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, has agreed to write this book, to be called "The View from the South". It is made possible through the support of the Government of Canada, the International Institute for Sustainable Development and ECOFUND 1992.

4. Public Information Activities

UNCED's programme of public information is carried out in close cooperation with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat to which budgetary resources were allocated for this purpose.

The first issues of Earth Summit News, the UNCED newsletter, was published just before the meeting of the Preparatory Committee. The entire run of 6,000 English copies was absorbed within a few weeks making it impossible to fill all requests. Other language editions were also widely disseminated. Kyoto Forum, a Japanese non-governmental organization, took the initiative of printing 10,000 copies in Japanese.

A new logo for the Conference depicting stylized hands holding a globe with the inscription In Our Hands was developed in conjunction with Dentsu Inc, a Tokyo advertising agency, which donated its services, and the Department of Public Information.

Mounting media interest in the Conference has been manifest, especially on the part of TV stations which require considerable lead time to prepare programmes.

E. UNCED Information System

In order to support the process of the preparations for the Conference, and to allow the widest possible participation of United Nations agencies, Governments and non-governmental organizations, the UNCED Secretariat has put in place a short-term programme, the UNCED Information System (UIS). The purpose of the UIS is to reach as large a part of the broad constituency of governments, inter- and non-governmental organizations, as possible, in order to facilitate their involvement in the preparatory process.

The Global Electronic Network (GEN)

The UNCED Global Electronic Network (GEN) has been in place for almost a year, and information about it was made available to the Preparatory Committee at its first and second sessions. Its backbone consists of a number of existing electronic networks, through which, UNCED has been providing official documents, speeches, updates, newsletters, schedules, etc., on electronic "read-only" bulletin boards or conferences. In addition to being the fastest way to get hold of UNCED documentation, the GEN has also managed to reach a larger worldwide constituency with information, than is normally possible in the preparation of similar United Nations conferences.

The GEN, however, needs to be tailored to reach an increasingly larger portion of UNCED's constituency in the governments, United Nations missions, the critical NGOs and the media, than has been possible up till now. Also, it is not sufficient to simply reproduce the official Preparatory Committee documents in the Global Electronic Network. More packaged information needs to be made available through this, and other channels of dissemination, such as abstracts of the official Preparatory Committee documents; lists of major recommendations; lists of documents; and lists of decisions.

The Processing of UNCED's Information

UNCED is receiving and producing a considerable quantity of information, both for the Preparatory Committee, and for the Conference itself, consisting of reports from United Nations agencies, background commissioned papers, reference UNCED Secretariat papers, as well as the formal documentation prepared for the meetings of the Preparatory Committee, which are increasingly presenting concrete recommendations on specific items - drafts of Agenda 21.

Given the quantity and the complexity of the information in these documents, as well as the need to ensure easy access to them, their processing and packaging is essential. The information that UNCED is receiving from different agencies of the United Nations and other international organizations, is being processed in a short reference bibliographic database.

The National Reports which are being prepared for UNCED are just beginning to be received. Their processing and analyses presents a particular challenge. In order to help this process, in addition to including the national reports in the short reference bibliographic database, UNCED is planning to set up a facility to allow the Secretariat to process the national reports in a full-text database format. This would allow rapid and easier analysis of these reports according the issues and cross-sectoral objectives of the 1992 Conference. Both the UNCED analysis, and the full national reports will be accessible through the UNCED Information System.

Additional databases under development at UNCED include a regularly updated list of major conferences, meetings, etc., on issues related to the agenda of the 1992 Conference, and a database of the contacts developed during the UNCED preparatory process.

While Agenda 21 will be prepared in a conventional, printed paper form, as the present drafts of Agenda 21 testify, it will also be presented in ways that will allow different users of information, to identify readily the elements of it basically relevant to their own work and interests. The Secretariat is exploring the use of full-text databases, as well as new information processing media, such as hypertext for this purpose. The latter allows the user to browse through a complex document, like in a conventional, cross-referenced encyclopaedia, following the important linkages from one issue to an other.

While the information that UNCED produces is already available through the Global Electronic Network, much of the target constituency does not at present have access to it. Other means are being explored to disseminate, the critical information to the missions and media rapidly, such as the annotated agenda of the Preparatory Committee meetings, as well as the list of documents, and their summaries.

The Conference

Detailed plans for the 1992 Conference are just now being developed. A number of specific activities are being explored, which will help in assisting the above issues. In order to manage the registration, and the internal communications of conference participants, an electronic registration and messaging system are being planned.

In addition to in-conference messaging, there will be a great need for communications with the rest of the world during this conference. This will be relevant for journalists, governments, as well as the NGOs which will be represented there. Considerable facilities will be required for electronic mail, fax, and telex facilities, as well as telephone, television, and other communications. UNCED, with the help of its Information Working Party has been exploring ways for the setting up of a communications system at the Conference.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES: VOLUNTARY AND TRUST FUNDS

It may be recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolutions A/45/211 and A/45/248 of 21 December 1990 decided that payment be made from the Voluntary Fund of the travel expenses of representatives of the developing countries and in addition, on an exceptional basis, that daily subsistence allowance be paid to one delegate from each of the least developed countries to enable them to participate fully and effectively in the Conference and in its preparatory process.

In pursuance of the above a number of Governments have contributed to the Fund and these resources were utilized to fund the participation of developing countries at the first two sessions of the PrepCom. Accounts information as at 31 May 1991 indicate that the amount of $1,479,500 has so far been contributed or pledged to the Voluntary Fund and has been used as follows:

Total amount contributed/pledged	1,479,500.0
Total used at PrepCom I and II	569,000.0
Balance available as of 31 May 1991	**910,500.0**
Amount required for PrepCom III	664,000.0
Balance available for PrepCom IV and 1992 Conf.	**246,500.0**
Amount required for PrepCom IV and 1992 Conf.	1,271,000.0
Total required/utilized	2,504,000.0
	(1,479,500.0)
Shortfall	**1,024,500.0**

It is therefore estimated that there is currently a shortfall of $1,024,500 in the Voluntary Fund to enable it to accomplish fully the purpose for which it was established.

Estimates of requirements are somewhat imprecise as it is not possible to know beforehand how many countries will actually utilize the fund. For example only 30 countries availed themselves of this facility at the first PrepCom while the number reached 90 during the second PrepCom. The present estimates are based on a similar number applying for funding of their participation for the remaining sessions of the PrepCom and the Conference itself. Thus the requirements may increase should a higher number of developing countries than estimated actually request funding for their participation in the PrepCom meetings.

Trust Fund for Preparatory Activities

The General Assembly at its forty-fifth session also took note of the establishment by the Secretary-General of the Conference of the Trust Fund for Preparatory Activities, the funds of which enabled the Secretariat to carry out a number of activities in support of the preparatory process as already outlined in document A/CONF/151/PC/14 submitted to the PrepCom at its last session.

Current records show that a total amount of $9,551,000 was contributed or pledged to this trust fund as of 31 May 1991 out of which it is estimated that $6,400,000 will be utilized by the end of this year. The fund will thus have a balance of $3,151,000 as opposed to approximately $4,000,000 required to continue to provide substantive support to the preparatory process and the Conference.

The countries from which contributions and pledges have so far been received for either fund are listed in the table attached herewith while discussions are under way with a number of other Governments in respect of their contribution.

UNCED TRUST FUNDS STATUS AS OF 31 MAY 1991

	Voluntary Fund		Trust Fund for Preparatory Activities	
Donors	**Contributions $**	**Pledges $**	**Contributions $**	**Pledges $**
Member States				
Austria*	50,000.0	-	-	-
Canada*	50,000.0	120,000.0	381,000.0	830,000.0
Denmark*	-	100,000.0	25,000.0	300,000.0
Finland*	200,000.0	-	-	587,000.0
France*	-	138,000.0	-	-
Italy	-	-	-	269,000.0
Myanmar*	500.0	-	-	-
Netherlands*	100,000.0	-	1,370,000.0	-
Norway*	300,000.0	-	955,000.0	-
Singapore*	50,000.0	-	-	-
Sweden*	200,000.0	-	3,000,000.0	-
Switzerland*	-	47,000.0	-	54,000.0
United Kingdom*	55,000.00	-	242,500.0	-
Others				
BCSD	-	-	18,000.0	54,000.0
ECOFUND	-	-	133,000.0	227,500.0
EEC	-	69,000.0	-	69,000.0
ITO YOKADO	-	-	-	200,000.0
UNDP	-	-	-	300,000.0
UNFPA	-	-	30,000.0	235,500.0
UNIFEM	-	-	249,500.0	-
UNICEF	-	-	-	14,000.0
TOTAL	1,005,500.0	474,000.0	6,404,000.0	3,131,000.0

Contributions by way of funds, equipment or staff services in support of the activities of the Trust Fund have also been pledged by or received from the Government of Canada, the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, the ECOFUND 1992, the Ito Yokado Chain Store of Japan, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSD), The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), United Nations Childrens' Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

III. OVERVIEW OF DOCUMENTATION AND ISSUES BEFORE THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

A. Overview of Documentation

The documentation before the Preparatory Committee at its third session is even more voluminous than what was presented at the second session. This reflects the many requests made to the Secretariat by the Preparatory Committee at its second session. The Secretariat has met to the extent that time and resources permitted, the requests for background studies and reports. With only one session remaining before the Rio Conference, the focus of discussions in the Preparatory Committee must necessarily shift to the proposals for action. The documentation presented for this session of the Preparatory Committee is designed to facilitate this shift in emphasis.

The documentation for Working Groups I and II distinguishes clearly between background documents, which contain analytical discussion of the issues, from documents which contain options for action to be included in Agenda 21 for the consideration of the Preparatory Committee. All of the latter are in a standardised format which present various potential programme areas and list under each programme area the basis for action, the possible goals/objectives and the activities subsumed under the programme area. These options for action flow from the analysis presented in the background papers and the two have therefore to be read together. It is essential that the Preparatory Committee give its views on the specific items contained in the papers which list options for action so that a coherent and integrated Agenda 21 can be presented for the consideration of the Preparatory Committee at its fourth and final session in New York. The only exception to this pattern are three issues which were not discussed in depth at the second session of the Preparatory Committee: these are transboundary air pollution, the depletion of the ozone layer and desertification. In these three cases the documentation before the Preparatory Committee lists background analysis as well as potential areas for action in the same document. On the basis of the discussions in the Preparatory Committee, these will be shaped into the same form as the other areas which have been presented in the separate documents on options for action.

Working Group III was constituted at the second session of the Preparatory Committee and commenced its deliberations but the substantive discussion of issues has yet to start. The documentation before the Preparatory Committee for this Working Group reflects this preliminary stage of deliberations. With regard to the Earth Charter, an annotated list of potential elements has been presented in document A/CONF.151/PC/78. A list of

legal instruments which could be examined by the Preparatory Committee, as also criteria for evaluation are presented in A/CONF.151/PC/77. Working Group II had also requested Working Group III to examine certain legal issues relating to Freshwater and these are presented in A/CONF.151/PC/79. The document on institutions and financial resources have to be read along with the documents which were prepared for the second session of the Preparatory Committee. The document on institutions lists certain specific proposals which have emerged in recent discussions.

The documentation for the Plenary also seeks to move the discussion closer to a consideration of specific proposals for action. The papers on financial resources and technology transfer list specific options for action which would have to be elaborated further on the basis of the view taken by the Preparatory Committee. A set of five papers deals with the issues covered in the Resolution 1/25 of the Preparatory Committee session in Nairobi. The first of these deals with specific proposals for action on poverty and environmental degradation on the basis of the very fruitful discussion which took place at the second session of the Preparatory Committee. The second paper tackles the analysis of growth patterns, demographic pressures, consumption patterns and environmental degradation. The third paper lists some issues for discussion on the linkages between the international economy and environmental degradation. The fourth paper deals specifically with the use of economic instruments for the promotion of sustainable development. The fifth paper is in the nature of a progress report on environmental and resource accounting which could play an important role in the monitoring of development. This set of papers also includes a contribution by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development which it is has made in response to General Assembly resolution 45/210. From the point of view of the potential outputs of the Conference this work area is expected to lead to both specific proposals for action of a programmatic nature or in the nature of policy guidelines as also a general statement on sustainable development. The latter will be based on a synthesis of the documentation presented to the Prep.Com., the subsequent syntheses and expression of views in the Preparatory Committee and the report that would emerge from the Hague Symposium on Sustainable Development: from Concept to Action.

The Plenary sessions of the Preparatory Committee will also consider certain other issues which would have a significant programmatic element and these are health, education and human settlements. In all three areas documentation before the Preparatory Committee includes background analysis as also options for action. On the basis of the view taken by the Preparatory Committee these two would be synthesized and integrated into Agenda 21.

Thus, the documentation which is presented before the Preparatory Committee provides the basis for synthesizing all of the major outputs envisaged for the Conference, except of course the specific conventions which are being negotiated elsewhere.

B. Issues before the Preparatory Committee

The issues before the Preparatory Committee have been defined in General Assembly Resolution 44/228. The documentation presented to the Preparatory Committee reflects the way in which the issues have been defined

in the mandate. There are, however, certain specific matters which need more particular attention than has been given to them in the documentation or in the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee.

The first such issue relates to Food Security. The current emergency in Sudan and Ethiopia provides dramatic evidence and reminds us that the problem is far from solved. Certain dimensions of this problem are dealt with in the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee on the issue of poverty as also in the issue of agriculture. However, it is perhaps desirable if the issue of food security, instead of being subsumed under these items, is taken up as a specific item for programmatic action by the Preparatory Committee. It is a matter of great concern to a large number of countries particularly in Africa. The roots of food security at the household or at the local or country level lie both in environmental and developmental factors. Hence, a systematic consideration of this issue is very much within the overall mandate of the 1992 Conference.

A related area which needs systematic attention in the work of the Preparatory Committee is the issue of environmental emergencies and the mechanisms for coping with this. Apart from food crise there are many other environmental emergencies which require concerted international action. Some of these may be in the nature of natural disasters like the recent tidal wave which caused havoc in Bangladesh, or the volcanic eruption in the Philippines. Some of these environmental emergencies, however, are the result of human activities like chemical accidents, radiation leeks or oil spills. A certain amount of capacity has been built up for international action in response to such emergencies. There are also several proposals for strengthening the response capacity at the national and international level. It would be worthwhile for the Preparatory Committee to consider this issue of environmental emergencies not just in relation to specific items but as a generic problem which requires an integrated response.

This leads to a third area which needs to be considered by the Preparatory Committee in greater depth, and this is environmental security. This has two dimensions. The first is the possibility that security conflicts could lead to environmental threats and environmental degradation. The impact of the recent war in the Gulf on the local and regional environment has clearly shown that this is an issue of major concern. The other dimension of this is the possibility that environmental degradation and the economic pressures that it generates could become a source of potential conflict. Both of these are matters which require systematic discussion in the Preparatory Committee.

An area of concern closely linked to the issues that have been referred to about is that of environmental refugees. It is an issue which is linked to food crisis, to environmental emergencies, and to the links between environment and conflict. This issue deserves greater attention within the broad mandate of this Conference which is considering both environment and development.

The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the above suggestions on certain areas which need more complete attention in the work programme of the preparatory process for the 1992 Conference.

C. An Information Strategy for UNCED

The collection and monitoring of data, analysis and assessments, as well as the transformation of the data to useful information, and its dissemination to the required users are important issues that are discussed in most sectoral papers. Information, however, goes beyond individual sectors, and has to be raised at a cross-sectoral level also. A strategy toward sound environment and development, Agenda 21 will need to be supported by such an information strategy: in its development, and in its implementation.

The availability of accurate and timely information to decision makers and the general public is an essential element of efforts toward sustainable development. Sound decisions must be based on such information, both in government, and elsewhere. Based on such information, it is possible to extract indicators, which are indispensable for the development of concrete targets and objectives. Some of these could be aggregated into indices, which, given the appropriate framework would be useful in defining, and targeting levels of sustainable development - an objective of the UNCED process.

The underlying theme of the agenda of the 1992 Conference is the importance of the linkages between environment and development. This is equally true in the area of information. A key problem is that historically, data collection was carried out along sectoral lines, disregarding the important linkages. Within the integrated environment-development framework, provided by the final form of Agenda 21, such linkages will be operationalized, and concrete guidance must be available for the data and information requirements: both for what to measure, and how to analyse.

Many countries are very far away from collecting all the bio-physical and socio-economic data required within an integrated environment-development context. A number of developing countries also lack the technical and financial resources to undertake such programmes. At the international level, the situation is not much better. At the regional level, even in the economically most advanced countries, relevant information of the linkages between the environment and economic sectors are lacking. At a global level, the available data are spotty, and lack sufficient resolution.

Concerted action needs to be undertaken to collect and monitor data at all levels, covering the state of, and the trends in natural resources; economic sectors; and in important ecosystems, including the linkages between the environmental and economic factors. Within these areas, priorities will need to be established, both at the national and international levels, to cover natural resources, or ecosystems.

The information, must also be available in different forms, to serve different purposes and different target groups. This requires further review, interpretation and assessment. The information should facilitate the integration of environmental and economic factors, and consequently facilitate the integrated evaluation of sectoral activities. Finally, it should stimulate public discussion, and facilitate public, private and corporate decision-making.

National state of environment and development reports, as well as national plans should be undertaken by all countries, on a regular, ongoing basis. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) should be extended to cover the impacts of overall sectors, and major decisions taken by government.

Much more work needs to be done to develop and quantify indicators of the state of, and trends in specific natural resources, ecosystems, and economic activities that link environmental conditions and economic activities. Some of these can be integrated into common indices, with the objective of providing a measure of progress. Although a lot of work has already been done in this area, we are very far from having measurable and comparable indices, particularly for the higher levels of integration, such as indices of sustainable development.

While further analytical and experimental work goes on to develop such indices, one should make more use of the "simpler" environment and development indicators, such as measures of resource stocks and flows, qualitatively or quantitatively. These serve different purposes, but also have their utility in measuring progress in specific areas. Some of these can be worked into Satellite National Accounts, to supplement existing monetary accounts of the economic system.

Some of the information can be made available on electronic on-line databases or bulletin boards, and through other means of computer assisted communications. These need to be pursued more actively by all countries. On-line information systems could be particularly effective for supporting intergovernmental processes. UNCED's Global Electronic Network is a step in this direction.

Access to existing information must be improved. There is a considerable need for more, or more effective integrative information sources, which do not directly hold specific data and information, but act as road maps, referral systems, helping the user find the relevant information.

The collection, processing, analysis, packaging and dissemination of information, while essential activities, can be quite costly. This has been a major obstacle, especially for developing countries. Remote sensing, land-based surveys, hardware and software for analysis, such as, for example for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be beyond reach for many potential users. Even more important deterrent is the training of relevant technicians, particularly in developing countries. Also, information, in order to be useful for decision making, needs to be available in different forms, including aggregated, and graphic versions, whose cost may be high.

The gap between developed and developing countries in their capacity for collecting, processing, analysing, packaging and disseminating information is widening. The reversal of this trend for developing countries will be essential.